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## CLARENCE.

By Rosa Vertner Johnson

WHILE the dim, autumn twilight stole o'er me,  
Alone, in the silence and gloom;  
A strange vision rose softly before me,  
A vision of beauty and bloom,  
A sweet dream of life's summer time, steeping  
My heart in its freshness and dew,  
'Till, where clouds o'er my spirit were sweeping,  
A warm light shone tenderly through.

Then I seemed not alone in the gloaming,  
For while the brown leaves, at my feet,  
Were all lost in the magical blooming  
Of daisies and violets sweet;  
While hedges of myrtle grew round me,  
And lilies sprang up in their pride,  
Lo ! the spell of enchantment that bound me,  
Was Clarence, who knelt by my side.

Haughty Clarence ! his earnest vows bringing  
To gladden my fond heart once more,  
As some strong wave with low murmurs stringing  
White shells around a tropical shore,  
'Till my heart, with love's witchery round it  
The charmer bereft of his spells,  
As the shore, by the billow that crowned it,  
Is roft of its chaplet of shells.

In his fathomless eyes I looked pleading,  
To know every thought of his soul,  
As some star dreamer earnestly reading  
A fate, on the midnight's blue scroll;  
With its mysteries ever enduring;  
Alas ! for that star-written lore,  
And alas ! for those dark eyes alluring  
Me on, with their light ever more.

All so perfect that vision—so real,  
My raptures so pure, and complete,  
I can scarcely belief it ideal  
That Clarence knelt there at my feet.  
For so soft hung the green boughs above me,  
I lived that last summer again,  
When his eloquent whisper, "I love thee,"  
Became my heart's changeless refrain.

And to hear those blest words now repeated  
Ay !—even though *false* be the vow,  
On the throne of the *world* were I seated,  
Its crown should be torn from my brow,  
And its sceptre all ruthlessly broken,  
If then, once again I could seem  
Still to hear them as earnestly spoken,  
As erst in my beautiful dream.

Then how thrilling his voice, and how tender—  
Yet how vain are such memories now,—  
For he said his soul worshipped the splendor  
Of beauty that sat on my brow,  
As a star, on the brow of the morning;  
I smiled, and he said that my smile,  
(Though his sun-god the east were adorning)  
A seer from his prayers might beguile.

Oh ! the violets never seemed bluer,  
Or the myrtles' white flowers more sweet,  
Ne'er a lover seemed fonder and truer,  
Than he who knelt there at my feet,  
While her purple wing twilight was pluming,  
But soon again dead leaves were blown,  
Where those dream flowers lately seemed blooming,  
Where Clarence had left me—alone

In the desolate gloom of the gloaming,  
With a fiery grief at my heart,  
Mid the light of its lustrous blooming,  
I saw that sweet vision depart,  
As by Irem's strange garden delighted  
The worn pilgrim seemeth to stand,  
'Til its vanishing leaves him benighted  
And sad, on the lone desert sand.

And as still to its glittering portal,  
Though fading, he clung with a hope  
That perchance to the prayers of a mortal  
Its radiant, pearl gates may ope,  
With a grief, fierce—well nigh unto madness,—  
I strove to recall once again,  
The enchantment, whose unreal gladness  
Still haunted my heart and my brain.

Yet the bleak winds came drearily drifting  
Sear leaves to my feet, where but now,  
Warm and fragrant, a June breeze seemed lifting  
The bright curls from Clarence's brow.  
On that spot—which mut ever seem lonely—  
My vision of joy has its grave,  
And, even in summer time, only  
The A-phodel there seems to wave.

With that dream did some kind fairy glad me,  
Whose fading my soul has bereft  
Of all joy. As the fair Ariadne,  
Of yore, by her false lover left,  
To lament in a far, friendless region,  
(Whose waves her sad sighs still repeat,)  
Thus, by memory's dim, blue Aegean,  
I mourn, like the maiden of Crete.

LEXINGTON, Ky.

## CLOUD PICTURES.

By Laura Elmer

AYS Ruskin, who has been a real benefactor to one, if not to thousands of his race: "The sky is the part of creation in which nature has done more for the sake of pleasing man, than in any other of her works." In the late summer and early autumn particularly, picture after picture, glory after glory, is constantly displayed, as the varying clouds, golden or silvery, or snowy white, are rolling, all "upon exquisite and constant principles of the most perfect beauty, and for our perpetual pleasure."

The sky, "almost human in its passions, almost spiritual in its tenderness," ever changing, gentle and awful; to the soul which is suffused with the spirit of beauty, spreads a chaos, but a chaos not dull and dark, but gorgeous, and almost self-leaping to animate life; which such a soul perfects or creates at will, giving these pictures or forms, a life and a name. Wonderful and delicious is such "beauty-making power."

Above, th' empyrean is hung  
With gems which beauty's self has flung ;  
Fair, "silvery forms of ages past  
Do hover up"—a picture vast ;  
Grotesque and elegant appear,  
And challenge smile, or fancy's tear;  
As rolls the panorama out,  
You gaze—and ere aware, you shout,  
'O, stay that beautiful white deer !'  
Ah ! me, 'tis gone—pursuers near,  
Drive it to leap the snow crag's side—  
The soft eye glares with terror wide—  
His slender legs drawn up in vain—  
He sinks—the azure sea shuts o'er his plain ;  
A hound all white, is howling for the slain.

A curious bird, with silver wing  
And breast of purest white,  
From downy nest doth upward spring,  
High in the dazzling light.

A queen, a queen ! 'tis ancient Bess,  
Her throat with ruff encased—  
Her milk-white palfrey's loveliness  
With silver trappings laced ;  
Her mantle—ne'er could Brussels loom,  
Or fingers of a nun,  
Whose dead heart waited for the tomb,  
Weave such exquisite one ;  
Of splintered diamonds you might think it done.

A shawl dance figures in the train—  
How lovely on the azure plain !  
Those limbs and scarf with kindred grace,  
Each other mazily o'erchase.

You horseman is too bold—his barb  
Is floundering through a fearful drift ;  
Erect in ancient knightly garb,  
To see his danger he's no gift ;  
The sea awaits his dashing stride—  
Sir knight, thou wert better by thy lady's side.

Upon an Island weiss,  
A dromedary white,  
Is bending daintily nice,  
And aiming with his might,  
In gracefulness to kneel !  
Beyond, in argent plumes,  
A peacock spreads his fan—  
His pretty neck assumes  
A scornful curve, and then,  
As lies the beast, a lump  
Of ugliness, and hump—  
The peacock gives a laughing squeal,  
So goes to those who, peer with zeal.

This Arab legend is a pearl :  
An Eastern Sheik came once to Solomon ;  
"O, king," said he, "life hath its changes many ;  
Yesterday, love and riches for us shone ;—  
To-day, we look about and have not any !  
And day by day, and year by year that goes,  
Still finds that something we hold fast is fleeting ;  
Give me a word to comfort me in woes,  
To keep me watchful when fair joys are meeting ;  
Something to humble in prosperity,  
Yet in adversity a joy discover ;  
Something that like an amulet shall be,"  
The king said, smiling, "This, too, will pass over!"